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INSPECTOR GENERAL

Approved For Release 2005/08/15 : CIA-RDP82-00357R000200080029-5

19 July 1978

MEMORANDUM FOR: Mr. James Taylor
Secretary, Executive Advisory Group

FROM: John H. Waller
Inspector General

SUBJECT: Report of the Performance Evaluation
Task Force

REFERENCE: Final Report of the Performance Evaluation
Task Force

1. I have the following comments to make on reference report:

2. In recommendation (9) listed on page 4 under II Format, it states:

"Proscribe panels from using information not known to the ratee."

I believe that this recommendation should acknowledge the desirability of promotion panels having the benefit of component (Division or Office) Personnel Management Committee rankings of employees, but stipulate that the employees affected also know where they stand in these rankings.

3. As the system now works in the Directorate of Operations, for example, the panels have the benefit of Divisional rankings -- not known to employees -- but it has been customary for the panels not to see these rankings until they have arrived at tentative rankings based only on fitness reports. This, I believe, is a mistake.

4. It is my opinion that the most valid ranking judgments of personnel within a Division or Office are those made by the Division or Office itself. It should be the panel's task to test these Divisional rankings against the paper record and then integrate them into one overall ranking list, including

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the personnel from all Divisions. To rely on fitness reports alone -- even assuming the newly recommended format and method will represent a vast improvement over the old -- is to increase the chances of misjudgements and inequities. I believe, moreover, that panels should have the benefit of Divisional or Office rankings before beginning their own integrated ranking process. This conclusion is admittedly based on an assumption that any fitness report system, however good at the outset, invariably deteriorates because of an inevitable upward creep of grading. It also suffers from certain natural problems, not the least of which is the innate cowardice of many supervisors who cannot bear to anger their subordinates or cause frictions by candid gradings. However regrettable, this is a human trait which I do not believe can be eradicated. Many brave efforts have been made in the past by this and other agencies to no avail. Division PMCs, however, know their people very well, can usually reach easy consensus and avoid the "supervisor cowardice" syndrome by group action instead of individual action in a grading process.

5. Of course employees should know all factors which go into their grading by a panel. Thus, I believe that they should know where they stand numerically in the Division or Office number grading before this listing goes forward to the panel. This being the case, my suggestion per above is not inconsistent with recommendation (9).

6. Another comment which I have pertains to recommendation II - C "Performance Progress Review." It is simply unnecessarily burdensome to require an interim report at mid-point between yearly evaluations.

7. I would suggest in a more general vein that the Performance Evaluation Report:

a. Document the employee's performance during the rating period, i.e., what did he do and how well did he do it?

b. Record supervisory judgement on the employee's capacity and potential for other assignments, both lateral and upward.

c. Rate the individual in comparison with his peers, both in terms of his present job and his potential for other positions.

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d. Recommend career development actions, training, other assignments, etc.

The Foreign Service Officer Evaluation Report at Tab L seems better suited for this purpose than the Agency's Fitness Report form, even as modified by the Task Force's recommendations.

8. The proposal on page 2 of Tab B to change the existing five-point adjectival scale to a seven-point numeric scale is not clear. It does not define what the seven points would mean. Is it simply a relative ranking curve? The five-point scale in Tab I (page 13) or the eight or nine-point scales in the Foreign Service form, Tab L (pages 3 and 5), are more meaningful.



John H. Waller

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EXECUTIVE CAREER SERVICE

SUPPLEMENTAL EVALUATION REPORT

COMMON ATTRIBUTES

Name: _____

Career Panel: _____ Grade: _____

Office of Assignment: _____ Date Prepared: _____

Covering the period from _____ to _____

1. QUALITY/PERFORMANCE: The degree to which an individual completes assignments with minimum supervision and within constraints of time, assets, information, etc.

COMMENT: _____

2. SELF-EXPRESSION (WRITTEN AND/OR ORAL): The effectiveness of the individual in expressing himself/herself orally and in writing.

COMMENT: _____

3. USE OF SOUND JUDGMENT: The degree to which an individual makes sound recommendations and sensible and logical decisions.

COMMENT: _____

4. EFFECTIVENESS IN INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS: The degree to which an individual successfully relates to and works with subordinates, peers, supervisors and counterparts in other organizations.

COMMENT: _____

5. CREATIVITY: The degree to which an individual identifies, develops and expresses innovative alternatives (solutions) to problems.

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6. WILLINGNESS TO ACCEPT RESPONSIBILITY: The readiness with which an individual identifies a need, organizes, devises and undertakes action.

COMMENT:

7. LEADERSHIP: The degree to which an individual influences, inspires or motivates others in the successful achievement of tasks or activities.

COMMENT:

8. EEO/AA: Performance/attitude/skills (See ANNEX 2, esp. para 3)

COMMENT:

9. MOBILITY: The individual's willingness to accept a reassignment irrespective of promotion opportunity or location.

COMMENT:

10. EXPERIENCE/VERSATILITY: The knowledge and ability an individual has gained from past assignments and self-education and willingness and ability to perform in a variety of new tasks.

COMMENT:

11. EVIDENCE OF SELF-IMPROVEMENT: The degree to which the individual has shown interest in his intellectual and professional growth through education/training or other collateral activities.

COMMENT:

12. POTENTIAL: The capacity for development and growth beyond the next logical and normal advancement level.

COMMENT:

SIGNATURE OF EMPLOYEE

Signature of Supervisor*

*Usually this will be the individual who prepares the Fitness Report

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PANELS

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Item II A 8 - Panels

Office of Personnel Comments

It is the Office of Personnel's recommendation that the coverage and composition of the panel system, as it is presently structured and is in conformance with current directives, be approved. In some Career Services and Career Service Subgroups the panel structure and scope of responsibility have been newly revised, and all the Services are presently reviewing criteria and standards. We believe the most effective management in the situation would be to let these developments mature before proposing further change. It also would seem counter-productive to install a new career management system while undergoing a personnel management study by outside consultants.

SUMMARY

Item II A 7 - Panels. Continue to develop panel criteria which address composition of panels and size of units handled by panels. Primary purpose is to build more objectivity in panel system; composition should be as broad as possible; number of people reviewed by panels should be larger.

The Career Services are uniform in their response to this item.

Panel Coverage

None of the Career Services believe panel responsibility should be expanded beyond discrete professional or expertise boundaries; in most instances this is office level. Their position is based on the rationale that comparative evaluation can only be successfully achieved when like or homogenous groups of employees are considered in relation to their peers. NFAC makes the point that the evaluation at the office level of employees in their developing years is "the fairest and most meaningful evaluation for all concerned". The E Service finds "comparative evaluation among different professions difficult, if not pointless". NFAC has a Directorate-level board for the evaluation of GS-14 and above personnel "because of the critical decisions concerning selection and development of employees to be the senior leaders of the future". The other Career Services also evaluate their senior personnel at the Directorate-level but begin at GS-15. Even in the DDO where, because the disciplines are common to all the Divisions and Staffs, there are Directorate-level panels for all employees (except some lower graded clerical), the GS-11 and above employees are divided into six categories by function for separate panel review.

The DDO has pointed out the logistical and time problems of expanding the coverage of a panel. In their panel process each panel member is required to review all the files under consideration. For a group of 200 files, with each member reviewing ten files a day, it takes 20 days to complete the file review alone; an additional two to three weeks is required to complete the whole process of evaluation and ranking. This is a full-time assignment during the period the panels are convened.

Panel Composition

There is also agreement among the Career Services on panel composition. To be effective in making the valued judgments of an individual's level of performance and potential for advancement, panel membership should consist of either the supervisory level or individuals experienced in the profession or discipline of the employees being evaluated. This is also true of the DDO albeit selection is made from the Directorate

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as a whole, e.g., reports officers evaluate reports officers, operations officers evaluate operations officers. The DDA notes that "knowledge of the position and the incumbent along with the record outlining the incumbents' performance are basic ingredients leading to an effective evaluation procedure". The evaluator without knowledge of the function or the person "will not have a full appreciation for all that is said in the Fitness Report with regard to the job and manner in which it is done".

The DDS&T has noted that while the objectivity of a "disinterested" panel is questionable, there would be no objection to running a pilot program such as noted in the Office of Personnel memorandum on this subject. The DDA proposes, that if such an experiment is to run, it take the form of an "outsider" sitting on the panel to review and comment on the procedures.

The time element noted by the DDO in the panel coverage, would also be a consideration in changing panel composition to membership unrelated to the category of employees being considered. Lack of background and experience on the part of panel members would require significant additional time in the evaluation process for file review, analysis of functions, job requirement levels, et al. While not a determining factor, physical space needs for such a lengthy process would also need to be considered.

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